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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMEMBASSY HANOI 000913

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS
FOR WHA/CCA (HILLSMAN), EAP/MLS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 2019/11/27
TAGS: [ETRD](#) [ETTC](#) [PREL](#) [CU](#) [VM](#)
SUBJECT: VIETNAM-CUBA: TITLE III OF THE LIBERTAD ACT

REF: STATE 115416

CLASSIFIED BY: Harry Kamian, Political Counselor, State, Hanoi;
REASON: 1.4(B), (D)

¶1. (C) Embassy contacts at the MFA and MFA-affiliated Diplomatic Academy of Vietnam insist that Vietnam and Cuba continue to enjoy warm, "fraternal" relations. Absent fundamental change in either country, there is little prospect that Vietnam will support U.S. priorities for Cuba, as outlined in Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act.

¶2. (C) Specific answers to reftel questions are as follows:

A.) Has the host country, in Post's opinion, worked to promote the advancement of democracy and human rights in Cuba?

-- No. Vietnam hews to a strict policy of non-interference based on its "friendship to all" foreign policy and consistently opposes all country-specific human rights interventions. Vietnam maintains a cordial relationship with Cuba, based on ideology and a shared history as members of the Soviet-led COMECON.

B.) Has the host country made public statements or undertaken other governmental actions, such as resolutions in the national assembly condemning human rights abuses in Cuba, or taken actions in support of civil society in Cuba through host country's diplomatic missions or other fora?

-- No. In addition to the factors mentioned above, Vietnam's National Assembly and state-run media have little discretion to deviate from policy lines dictated by the Communist Party of Vietnam (CPV). Promoting human rights and an independent civil society are not mission priorities for Vietnam's diplomats.

C.) Have there been any high-level diplomatic visits between Cuba and the host country in the past six months?

-- State President Nguyen Minh Triet visited Havana September 27-29. There, he met with Fidel Castro, Raul Castro, and National Assembly President Ricardo Alarcon. Triet also met Raul Castro July 16 at the 15th annual Non-Alignment Movement Summit in Egypt. According to Nguyen Khanh Van from the MFA Latin America Office, Communist Party External Relations Commission Chair Hoang Binh Quan visited Havana November 7-11, and Construction Minister Nguyen Hong Quan visited Havana October 18-23 to attend the 27th meeting of the Vietnam-Cuba Inter-governmental Committee for Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation. The Deputy Coordinator of the Revolutionary Protection Committee Ruben Peres Rodriguez attended the Vietnam Fatherland Front (VFF) Congress in Hanoi, September 28-30, and met with VFF Chair Nguyen Huynh Dam.

D.) What is the nature of investments (and names, if known) that host country businesses have in Cuba?

--Vietnam's Nhat Trang Trade and Tourism Co. Ltd. has a subsidiary in Cuba which reported exports in 2008 to Cuba totaling \$2.5

million. Export products include electrical appliances, furniture, textiles, shoes, food and other products. For 2009, the company reported signed export contracts worth \$31.3 million. Vietnam is assisting Cuba in rice cultivation and implementation of projects to grow maize and soya totaling USD 3.4 million.

E.) Are there any bilateral trade agreements or other cooperative agreements between host country and Cuba?

--On September 28, Vietnam and Cuba signed the Vietnam-Cuba Joint Business Committee's Action Program for 2009 - 2010 during President Triet's September visit to Havana. Other agreements signed during the visit include cooperative agreements on transportation and food production in Cuba during 2009-2015, and a cooperative agreement between the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Cuba's Ministry of Light Industry. The two governments also agreed on a medium-term loan program to help Cuba boost domestic food production.

During a visit to Cuba on May 2, Vietnam General Confederation of Labor (VGCL) President Dang Ngoc Tung and Salvador Valdes Mesa, a member of the Communist Party of Cuba (CPC)'s Political Bureau and General Secretary of the Cuban Workers Central Union, signed an agreement to increase delegation exchanges and cooperation in personnel training.

F.) Are there any exchange programs between host country and Cuba, including but not limited to: scholarships for host country nationals to study in Cuba; Cuban-paid medical travel for host country nationals; and Cuban doctors working in host country?

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-- Vietnam and Cuba maintain an annual academic exchange program that provides 20 university and graduate scholarships, with half studying in Cuba, half in Vietnam. According to the MFA, there are no Cuban doctors working in Vietnam.
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